

Remarks

This is responsive to the Office Action dated February 6, 2004 in which the Examiner rejects all the pending claims 1-36 as either being anticipated by, or being obvious over, Weinstein et al. (US Patent Application Publication 2001/0026609 A1). Applicants have further amended independent claims 1, 16, 32 and 36 and dependent claims 2, 13, 14 and 28, 29, and added dependent claims 37 - 44 to better define the present invention. Claim 35 is cancelled without prejudice to overcome the objection of the Examiner. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of the Examiner based on the amended claims as explained in detail below.

As amended, independent claims 1 further includes a feature that the electronic token includes a telephone number or an IP address of said destination party. Thus, there is no need to look up or acquire the telephone number or IP address of the destination party so as to initiate the voice call connection to the destination party. Preferably, as defined in the newly added dependent claim 37, the electronic token further includes the telephone number or IP address of the offeree, thus there is no need to include a step to acquire such information to initiate the voice call connection to the offeree. Therefore, the computer system (such as the bridgeport or changeover server) can initiate voice call connections to the destination party and the offeree solely rely on the information provided in the electronic token. These distinguishing features are also reflected in amended independent claims 16, 32, 36 and their newly added dependent claims 39, 41 and 43 in similar language, and are fully supported in the original Specification (e.g., see line 8 – 16, page 13).

Applicants believe that the above amendment has rendered independent claims 1, 16, 32 and 35 not anticipated by Weinstein et al (US Patent Application US 2001/0026609 A1). In particular, Weinstein does not teach or imply that the electronic token includes a telephone.

number (or PSTN extension) or an IP address (or data network address), as now expressly defined in amended independent claims 1, 16, 32 and 36.

Weinstein discloses a system for facilitating a web-initiated telephone call between two parties, particularly applicable in an anonymous dating service. To use the service, both the parties must sign up a member number with the service and provide their telephone numbers to the system. The call can be activated by one party's clicking a link embedded in an electronic greeting card that he/she has received by email from the other party. Upon activation, a Customer Database & Calling Engine uses the member numbers of the two parties to look up their telephone numbers from the Customer Database so as to make outgoing calls to both the parties and then bridges the two calls, thereby preventing the two parties from knowing each other's telephone number and other information (names, addresses, etc.). However, contrary to the assertion of the Examiner in the Office Action (page 4, item 10), there is no teaching or implication in Weinstein that the link (read as "electronic token") includes the telephone number or PSTN extension of either party. Applicant has also carefully reviewed paragraph 0057 of Weinstein cited by the Examiner but cannot find any support for such an assertion. In fact, because the Customer Database & Calling Engine is an integral part in Weinstein, the telephone number of either party is not needed to be included in the link, and preferably not included in view of the anonymous nature of the service. Moreover, Weinstein does not teach to include an IP address or data network address of either party, too. In fact, both the two voice calls in Weinstein are PSTN calls, and an IP address of either party is not needed to make the calls. Therefore, Applicants believe that independent claims 1, 16, 32 and 36 are not anticipated by Weinstein under 35USC §102(e), and is thus patentable.

At least for the same reasons, dependent claims 2 – 6, 8 - 15, 17-31, 33 and 37 – 44 are also patentable. In particular, newly added claims 37, 39, 41 and 43 further include a distinguishing feature that the electronic token includes the telephone number or IP address of the offeree, which cannot be found anywhere Weinstein. Moreover, claims 38, 40, 42 and 44 further define that the telephone number or IP address of the offeree is provided by the offeror, which cannot be found in Weinstein either. In fact, the system in Weinstein works to prevent two parties from knowing each other's telephone numbers, which is clearly teaching away from this distinguishing feature. Therefore, the patentability of claims 37- 44 is further strengthened.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the claims in view of the amendment to the claims and the above remarks. The Examiner is authorized to charge any shortages or credit any overpayments to our deposit account number 11-0223.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal service as first class mail, in a postage prepaid envelope, addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on May 7, 2004.

Dated May 7, 2004 Signed _____ Print Name Jeffrey I. Kaplan